



ACTON PLANNING BOARD

**Minutes of Meeting
June 8, 2004
Acton Memorial Library**

RECEIVED & FILED

DATE JUNE 23, 2004

Maura M. Haberman
TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Planning Board members Ms. Lauren Rosenzweig (Chairman), Mr. Christopher Schaffner, Mr. Patrick Halm, Mr. Greg Niemyski, and associate Ms. Stacy Rogers were in attendance. Also present were Town Planner, Mr. Roland Bartl and Planning Board Secretary, Ms. Maura Haberman. Mr. Ed Pearson (Vice Chair) and Mr. Hart Millett were absent.

Ms. Rosenzweig called the meeting to order at 7:38 PM.

I. Citizens Concerns

No citizens concerns were presented.

II. Consent Agenda

A. Maynard Country Club:

The Maynard Country Club had sought Planning Board approval for change in proposed landscaping plan and sought a formal vote to amend the plan. They also would like to release the \$45,000 Bond still being held on the project for new hole #2 in Acton near Carlton Drive. All work has been completed. Landscaping Plan Amendment and release of \$45,000 Bond was approved.

B. Approval of 5/25/04 Minutes:

The minutes of 2/24/2004 were approved as written.

C. Bond Calculation Thunder Way—294 Arlington Street, submitted by Paula Stan Gordon:

A Bond Calculation in the amount of \$38,300 to cover complete construction cost was approved.

III. Reports

CPC: Mr. Schaffner reported that the CPC is currently compiling this year's successful applicants, and using this year's funding round as a process to learn from for next year.

MAGIC: No report at this meeting time.

OLAC: No report at this meeting time.

EDC: Has not met since last Planning Board meeting.

EDIC: Ms. Rosenzweig reported that interviews have been conducted and a second round of interviews is scheduled for June 8th and then selection will begin. The candidates are reported to have excellent backgrounds. Mr. Josh Chernin will be the Chairman of the EDIC.

OTHER

Ms. Rosenzweig and Ms. Rogers attended a Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan meeting to help learn how to solve wastewater problems in Acton. Topics were on sewage treatment and alternative plans. The next meeting is scheduled for July 15th. Ms. Rogers will attend.

RT. 2 CAC: Mr. Halm reported they meet four times a year: June, March, September and December, in the morning hours. A new median strip is being placed along Rt. 2 and will run from Crosby's Corner to Emerson Hospital and construction will begin the week of June 14. Mr. Halm stated that with his term on the Planning Board ending, he will no longer cover the Route 2 CAC meetings for the Board. Following discussion about Board member commitments within several other committees, it was decided to leave this position vacant and to ask the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) for occasional updates. Mr. Halm confirmed that a Selectman and a member of TAC usually attend Rt. 2 CAC meetings.

IV. Appointment: Omni Group—Proposed 40B Project Behind Nagog Park

Mr. Joel Kahn, of Equity Alliance and Mr. David Hale of the Woodlands at Laurel Hill, LLC, presented to the Planning Board a 352-Unit, 40B apartment/rental development project (Woodlands at Laurel Hill) of which 296 units would be in Acton and 56 in Westford. Mr. Kahn gave an overview description of the project stating that it will have eleven buildings (9 in Acton, 2 in Westford) with a total of 498 parking spaces. Currently, floor plans were not available, but larger, more detailed presentations would come at a later date. Two different models of buildings were illustrated, one holding 24, the other, 28 units per building.

<i>Approximate Unit Sizes Would Be:</i>	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	2-Bedroom
Sq. Ft.	850 Sq. Ft.	1065 Sq. Ft.	1290 Sq. Ft.
Rental Price	\$1,350.00	\$1,550.00	\$1,875.00

Mr. Kahn characterized the project as an "upscale rental housing project for renters-by-choice". He pointed out a common wastewater facility placed on the Westford side with a 96,000 gallon leach filed capacity. These plans will be submitted to the state in four weeks. The Planning Board felt there would be significantly increased traffic on Rt. 2A due to the high volume of cars entering and exiting the development. Ms. Rosenzweig recommended a traffic study to include the Brookside shops and the Concord Road intersection in East Acton Village, because a traffic light has been proposed there previously. Mr. Kahn stated that they have contracted Vanasse and Associates to conduct traffic studies. Mr. Niemyski asked if Omni Group could assist the Town of Acton with the planned North Acton Fire Station given the large scale of the proposed project and sizable distance to the nearest current fire station location. This request was echoed by other members of the Board. Mr. Kahn stated that they would take it into consideration. He also pointed at a private lane to Nonset Path, which is in the developer's control and would be improved for secondary emergency access. Mr. Niemyski pointed out that, as rental apartments, all dwelling units in Acton would count towards Acton's 40B affordable housing stock. He expressed concern about the apartments turning into ownership units/condominiums in the future and Acton losing its 40B credits. Mr. Kahn stated that they intend on keeping these as apartments. Several Planning Board members stated that the site – next to an office park with retail accessible near Great Road – is a logical location for apartments or multi-family development. The Board had questions about the proposed wastewater treatment plant in Westford, and asked why an upgrade of the Nagog Park treatment facility was not considered. Mr. Kahn explained the Nagog plant has physical and regulatory problems that Omni Group cannot resolve. Asked what else could fit on the extensive portion of property in Westford other than the leaching fields and two residential buildings, Mr. Kahn assured the Board that there would be very little else that could be done. He cited wetlands constraints and noted that they are currently conducting a natural heritage survey. Currently, the wastewater treatment plant is shown off Durkee Lane in Westford near the apartment buildings; however, alternatives are being sought for another location closer to the leaching fields. Mr. Kahn said that he would set a meeting up with the Westford and Acton Health Departments to discuss wastewater issues and questions in more detail. Mr. Kahn said that he would forward to Mr. Bartl a list of similar projects completed in MA. The estimated impact to the Acton schools for would be forty children/year.

The Board asked Mr. Bartl to create a draft comment letter for the Board to send to the Appeals Board once a formal project application has been filed.

V. Jackson Drive Extension Roundabout Discussion

A resident concern was brought to the Chairman's attention for a discussion of Planning Board members. Ms. Alpert of 25 Jackson Drive wanted the Planning Board to consider alternatives for changing a large grooved concrete triangle which she felt to be a problem aesthetically and functionally. Planning Board members noted that the Board required these splitter islands on both sides of the Jackson Drive circle for safety reasons. The narrowing of the travel lane causes the traffic to slow down and this has been shown to be effective. The sizes of the islands vary due to the roadway geometry. The road is wide enough for regular traffic flow and for school buses. It is felt that safety is the Planning Boards first mandate. A motion to make no changes passed by a vote of 3-1.

VI. CPC Planning Board Representative--Appointment

Mr. Schaffner will be representing CPC until June 30, 2004 and then Ms. Rogers will be the new CPC representative effective July1, 2004 (pending Board of Selectmen full Planning Board appointment of Ms. Rogers)

Vote: A Motion to appoint Ms. Rogers to CPC effective July 1 passed by a vote of 4-0.

VII. Planning Board Guidelines

Ms. Rosenzweig asked Board members for feedback on the Planning Board guidelines she had prepared. Board members felt that it is a good reminder for new and current Board members. Board members suggested a more formal guidance package for existing and newly appointed members.

VIII. Summer Meeting Schedule

The Board will meet on the following dates this summer: June 22, July 20, and Aug. 10.

The Board canceled the following meetings scheduled this summer: July 13 & 27, Aug. 24.

IX. Discussion

Planning Board members narrowed down what they would like to focus on over the next year: Top Priorities: The Master Plan; NPDES; Implementing the EO-418 Housing Plan. Mr. Bartl suggested preparing a scope for the Master Plan, perhaps with public participation, before seeking capital funding from Town Meeting. He noted that the Town has severe fiscal constraints and many competing funding requests. Once funded, the master plan effort would be a three-year project, or so. Other items on the to do list were: Reviewing any needed updates or items for improvements in the Subdivision Rules and Regulations; TDR; a two-year planning effort for Kelly's Corner; continuation of Public Outreach; re-evaluating parking requirements.

A discussion about fall zoning Town Meetings followed. Apparently this had been brought up for consideration in a recent Selectmen's meeting. Board members expressed their concerns about moving zoning issues to a fall town meeting. Special interest turn-out for zoning-only town meetings could negatively impact zoning articles.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45.